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2 run to replace retiring Judge Bastine

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A judge and a court commissioner entered the race Monday for an opening on the Spokane County Superior Court bench.

District Court Judge Harold Clarke III said Monday he will file for the seat that becomes open next year because Superior Court Judge Paul Bastine is not seeking re-election. Clarke, who was elected to the district court in 1998, currently serves as that court's presiding judge.

Superior Court Commissioner Joseph Valente, who had previously filed to run against Superior Court Judge Sam Cozza, said he was switching to the open seat at the urging of Bastine.

When Bastine announced last week he was not seeking re-election, he named Valente as someone he hoped would run because they had worked together and shared similar views.

All 12 Superior Court seats are up for election this year, but Bastine's is the only one that is known to be open at this time. Sitting judges are rarely challenged in Spokane County, and even more rarely defeated.

"There aren't many open seats," Clarke said. "It could get interesting."

Because candidates don't file for office in Washington state until the last week in July, it's still possible to change which position on the ballot a person will seek. Other than filing an amended candidate statement with the state Public Disclosure Commission, Valente's biggest challenge might be revising the yard signs he already had printed that now carry the wrong position number.

Some are in remote locations so "it may take a little while," he said.

For the record, Valente and Clarke will be running for Position 8. Cozza is in Position 6, and has already drawn an announced challenge from former Spokane City Councilman Steve Eugster.

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